

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8025

As of January 31, 2010

Brief Description: Requesting that a retired space shuttle orbiter be transferred to Washington's museum of flight.

Sponsors: Senators Prentice, Haugen, Fraser, Shin and Roach; by request of Governor Gregoire.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 2/01/10.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Staff: Sherry McNamara (786-7402)

Background: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) space shuttle orbiters are the first spacecraft capable of routinely launching into orbit like rockets and then returning to Earth as gliders. The orbiters are used for scientific research and space applications, such as deploying and repairing satellites. The first operational flight began in 1982. The Space Shuttle Program, part of the Space Transportation System, is scheduled to be retired from service in 2010 after 134 launches.

Typical space shuttle missions have crews of about seven astronauts, orbit at altitudes of around 150 to 250 miles, and stay in space for ten days to two weeks.

Six Space Shuttle orbiters have been built:

- *Enterprise*: Used for testing purposes only;
- *Columbia*: First operational mission carried four astronauts on November 11, 1982. It broke apart during re-entry on February 1, 2003;
- *Challenger*: First flight was on April 4, 1983. It disintegrated 73 seconds after launch in 1986;
- *Discovery*: First flew on August 30, 1984. On August 28, 2009 it travelled to the International Space Station. Last planned flight for the space shuttle program is September 16, 2010.
- *Atlantis*: First flight was October 3, 1985. Last planned flight is May 14, 2010.
- *Endeavour*: First flight was May 7, 1992. Last planned flight is July 29, 2010.

NASA's current plans call for the Space Shuttle to be retired from service in 2010. The Shuttle Discovery has been promised to the Smithsonian Institutions's National Air and

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Space Museum, and the Atlantis and the Endeavour are planned to be sold to other education institutions or museums.

The Museum of Flight (Museum) is an independent, accredited, non-profit museum regarded as one of the largest air and space museums in the world, attracting more than 400,000 visitors annually. The Museum is located on Boeing Field. In addition to the Red Barn, Boeing's first manufacturing facility, the Museum's collection includes more than 150 historically significant air and spacecraft.

Summary of Bill: The Senate Joint Memorial requests that NASA transfer one of the remaining Space Shuttle orbiters, Atlantis or Endeavour, to the Museum of Flight in Seattle upon its retirement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.